

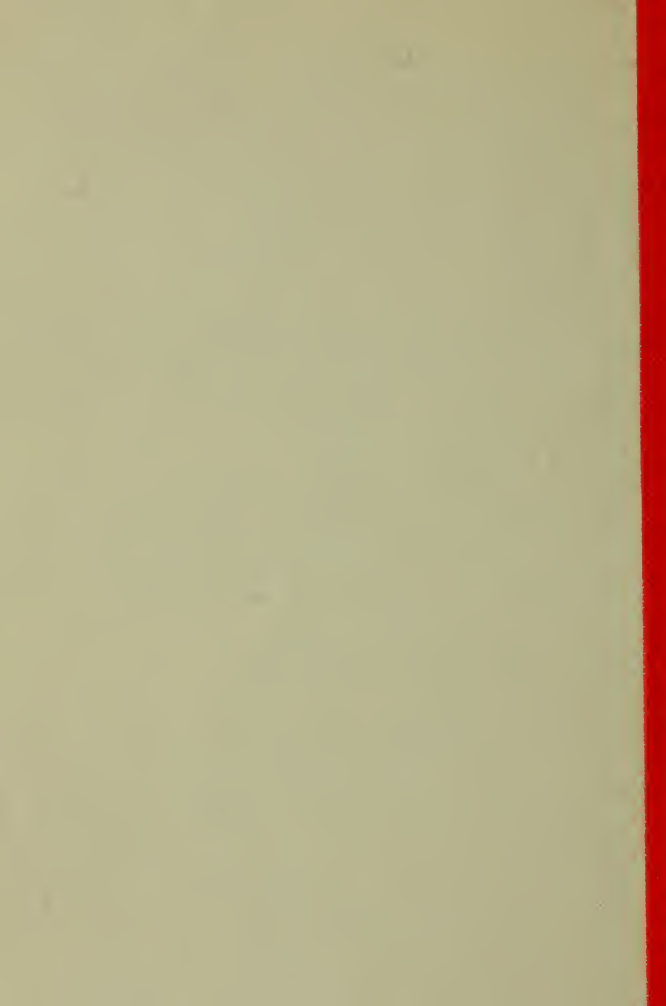


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THE

Cruise of the Catalpa.

A POEM.

BY

JOHN J. BRESLIN,

*Chief of the Rescuers of the Fenian Prisoners from
Freemantle, Australia.*



BOSTON :

PRESS OF ROCKWELL & CHURCHILL,
39 ARCH STREET.

1876.



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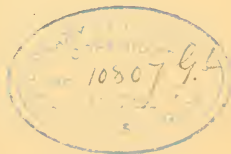
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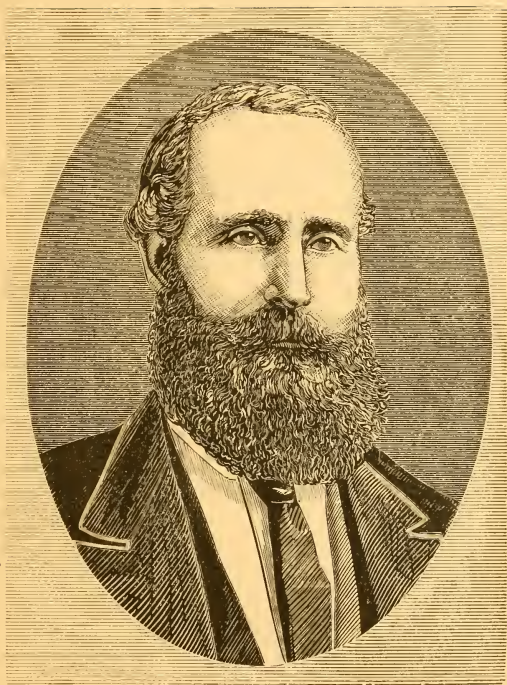
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[*Written on board the "Catalpa."*]

A DESCRIPTIVE POEM

OF THE

Rescue of the Fenian Prisoners

FROM

FREEMANTLE, AUSTRALIA.



It was on Easter Monday, in 'Seventy-six,
In Freemantle the jailers were all in a fix,
From Fauntleroy,* down to Amen-timbortoe,†
There was racing and chasing and bother, you know,
For the Fenians had sliddered‡ right off in a row;
But what's that to any one, whether or no?

Oh! Wilson and Cranston and Hogan are gone,
With Darragh and Hassett and staunch Harrington;
For Collins and Johnston have opened the ball,
And to join in the dancing, out step Jones and Hall,
And they tripped to a tune that was far from being slow;
But what's that to any one, whether or no?

* Comptroller-General.

† Nickname of the prison chaplain.

‡ Prison slang, meaning slipping away.

Cops,* warders and soldiers are running a race
 And the mounted policemen prepare to give chase;
 In the pensioner's barracks the trumpet did blow,
 And old Finnerty's† bugle was purple, I know;
 But the boys know their road, and are bound for to go;
 So what's that to any one, whether or no?

There are two trotting teams on the Rockingham road,
 From the gloom of a prison each bearing its load,
 And full hearts are beating with freedom and joy,
 As they sweep 'round the sand hills and through the Black-
 boy.

With the sunlight of Hope every face is aglow;
 But what's that to any one, whether or no?

On, on through the bush, as they ride to the beach,
 In vain for his captives may Robinson‡ screech,
 And Harvest§ may swagger to cover his fears
 As they drag out the guns of the Perth volunteers;
 But the Fenians are off; they may puff, pant and blow;
 For what's that to any one, whether or no?

Near Rockingham jetty, upon the white sand,
 With revolvers and rifles the Fenians stand —
 Gay, fearless and free, stepping into their boat;
 Shove her off! then out oars! on the waters afloat!
 Now a right saucy Yankee tar takes them in tow;
 And what's that to any one, whether or no?

* Slang for police.

† Major Finnerty, commanding the military in Freemantle; bugle being slang for nose, and the major's fuddled up to the orthodox rosy red.

‡ W. F. C. Robinson, Governor of West Australia, who was so eager to capture us that he personally assisted to put the cannon and ammunition on board.

§ Colonel Harvest, commander of the forces in West Australia.

Now Silvee and Toby and Mopsa give way,
For the good ship *Catalpa* lies out in the bay.
“Come down, you big Louis,” the captain did roar,
“Now what do you say, men? pull off from the shore;
You Lombar, keep stroke; pull, men, cheerily, oh!”
And what’s that to any onei whether or no?

Now past Garden Island, and clear off the Sound,
Make sail on the boat, pass the liquor around;
Shift your seats, trim the boat, as she bends to the breeze,
And light as a sea-gull skims over the seas;
There’s a rest from the oar, while the fair breezes blow;
And what’s that to any one, whether or no?

At six in the evening we sighted the bark,
And we steered on her track till the evening grew dark,
When a squall coming down, with its venomous blast,
Almost swamped our good boat, as it tore out her mast;
So all night on the billows we tossed to and fro;
But what’s that to any one, whether or no?

Next morning at seven we raised her again,
Topsails, mainsails and hull — we were nearing her plain,
When we spied the *Georgette*, steaming out of the Sound,
And we knew by her course for the bark she was bound;
So we hauled down our sail, then lay to and lay low;
But what’s that to any one, whether or no?

So the *Georgette* passed by bearing down on our ship;
All safe for the present — now, boys, let her rip;
Then we pulled in her wake for to see what she’d do,
And beside the *Catalpa* we saw her heave to,
And lay alongside her ten minutes or so;
But what’s that to any one, whether or no? .

See the *Georgette* steams off, and is running inshore ;
Make sail on the boat, out with paddle and oar ;
For with every sail set, on her course down the bay,
The good ship *Catalpa* is bearing away.
To gain on her now we've a hard row to hoe ;
But what's that to any one, whether or no ?

To follow our bark we were pulling amain,
When we saw the *Georgette* coming for us again.
In search of our boat she was steaming right back,
And we almost despaired as we lay in her track ;
So we hauled down our sail and again we lay low ;
And what's that to any one, whether or no ?

Still nearer and nearer the steamer came on,
And our plan of escape seemed all shattered and gone ;
Hope faded away to a very small speck,
As we saw her lookout and the men on her deck ;
But she passed us unseen — Fate had ordered it so ;
And what's that to any one, whether or no ?

So the steamer passed on, and was soon out of sight ;
Boys, now for the bark, we must catch her ere night ;
Every stroke is for freedom — pull fast, and pull strong —
Pull, fellows, together and send her along ;
See the bark change her course, heading for us I trow ;
And what's that to any one, whether or no ?

It was two in the evening, and everything clear,
The bark coming to us, and nothing to fear,
When a sail on our lee, standing out from the shore,
Set us pulling our strongest with paddle and oar ;
It's a race for the ship, men ; then row, bullies, row !
But what's that to any one, whether or no ?

With the sail on our lee, heading on for the ship,
We pulled strong and steady, and gave her the slip;
For beside the *Catalpa* we tossed oars at three,
With the water-police boat close up on her lee.
Quick on deck now, my lads! It was just "touch and go;"
But what's that to any one, whether or no?

Hoist the star-spangled banner, the flag of the free!
The brightest and best that waves over the sea:
May its stars ever brighten, its shadow increase,
Then a fig for John Bull and his water-police.
Wear ship! then for sea, blow you fair breezes, blow!
And what's that to any one, whether or no?

Here's a health to brave Anthony, pass it along,
May his fortune be great, and his name live in song;
Here's to Smith, our first-mate, fill your glasses with glee,
For a right manly, true-hearted sailor is he.
Here's success to the cause that we all of us know;
But what's that to any one, whether or no?

Here's the good ship *Catalpa*, and all her ship's crew;
Land of felons and jailers, here's to you adieu,
From your dry, sandy shores we are speeding away,
May your fortune be brighter at no distant day;
Here's the land of the free, may it flourish and grow, —
And God prosper old Ireland wherever we go.

Rolling Home.

[The following is one of his latest literary efforts,— which was often sung by the ship's company, — a song entitled "Rolling Home," which eminently proves that he is possessed of as much poetic fire and genius, as he is of tact and ability to carry out great political undertakings.]

Right across the Indian Ocean, while the trade-wind follows
fast,

Speeds our ship with gentle motion; fear and chains behind
us cast.

Rolling home! rolling home! rolling home across the sea;
Rolling home to bright Columbia; home to friends and
Liberty.

Through the waters blue and bright, through dark wave
and hissing foam,

Ever onward, with delight, we are sailing still for home;
O'er our pathway in the sunshine flies the wide-winged
albatross;

O'er our topmast in the moonlight hangs the starry southern
cross.

Rolling home, etc., etc.

By the stormy Cape now flying, with a full and flowing sail;
See! the daylight 'round us dying on the black breast of
the gale;

See! the lightning flash above us, and the dark surge roll
below;

Here's a health to those who love us, here's defiance to the
foe.

Rolling home, etc., etc.

Now the wide Atlantic cleaving, with our good ship speeding
free,
The dull "Cape of storms" we're leaving far to eastward on
our lee;
And as homeward through the waters on the old *Catalpa*
goes,
Ho! you fellows on the masthead, let us hear once more,
"He blows!"

Rolling home, etc., etc.

Next by lonely St. Helena, with a steady wind we glide,
By the rock-built, sea-girt prison where the gallant French-
man died;
With the flying-fish and porpoise sporting round us in the
wave,
With the stars and stripes of freedom floating o'er us bright
and brave.

Rolling home, etc., etc.

Past "the Line!" and now the Dipper* hangs glittering in
the sky,
Onward still! in the blue water see the Gulf-weed† passing
by.
Homeward! homeward to Columbia! blow you steady
breezes, blow;
Till we hear it from the masthead, the joyful cry, "Land,
ho!"

Rolling home, etc., etc.

* American sailors called Ursa Major the Dipper.

† Meeting the Gulf-weed out at sea encouraged Columbus and his sailors to continue on their course, it being considered an indication of land.

The Cruise of the Catalpa.

A Song written on the Homeward Voyage, and dedicated to the Crew.

I'm Irish, if you like, and perhaps my name is Mike;
 I'm a land-crab, and but little of a sailor;
 So, for want of better news, now I'll tell you of a cruise
 I once took on board a simple Yankee whaler.
 From New Bedford she was bound to the Western whaling
 ground,

Where they said the whales were always found in plenty;
 So a willing son of toil, in the hope of striking oil,
 I shipped, the greenest hand amongst the twenty.
 Our old barque was staunch and sound, copper-fastened
 and well found, —

When I call her old, don't think that I deride her;
 Catalpa was her name, and when first on board I came,
 I can tell you it was rather "rough on Snyder;"
 For the captain and the mate, they were up both soon and
 late,

And around the decks kept hollering and bawling;
 Though I wasn't very sick, faith I'd rather cut my stick,
 Than those blasted ropes eternally keep hauling.

Chorus.—Pass the bottle, if you please, now we're sitting at
 our ease,

Let us moisten up till song flows ripe and mel-
 low;

Here's to every honest lass, and together as they
 pass,

Here's a health to every honest, manly fellow!

Well we weathered out a gale, when we captured our first
whale,
And a bully hundred-barreller we got ;
May I never die in sin, when it came to cutting-in,
All hell was there to pay, and no pitch hot ;
For the skipper stamped and tore, and the mates they
jumped and swore,
When they might as well just take it cool and easy ;
And the way the blubber flew round the decks among the
crew,
You'd imagine every man of them was crazy.
So we cruised the season out where the sperm-whales did
spout,
And I learned what cutting-in and trying-out meant ;
When, on a friendly call, we anchored at Fayal,
And sent our oil on shore there for transshipment.
Then we hoisted sail again, bound for the Spanish main,
Six months upon hard-tack, salt beef and pork.
Some may like a sailor's life, but I'd rather have a wife,
And the humblest little shanty in New York.

Chorus. — Pass the bottle round, etc.

Steering for the river Platte, so the captain and the mate
Told us, green ones, who inquired where we were going ;
But eastward, day by day, we kept bearing still away,
And where he meant to stop there was no knowing.
So the shellbacks then began to growl at the "old man,"
Steering for the river Platte in such a manner ;
But as little did they know where the skipper meant to go,
As a puppy dog of etiquette or grammar.
Well, we sighted land at last, and soon our anchor cast,
But to name the place, I guess, my friends, would fail ye ;
For the land to which we bore, and where we went ashore,
Was Bunbury, in Western Australia.

We entered for recruits, wood, water, fish and fruits,
 Spuds, onions, and our liberty on shore ;
 In a fortnight, well prepared, scrubbed, painted and repaired,
 We hoisted sail and put to sea once more.

Chorus. — Pass the bottle round, etc.

And then the joy began for every Irishman,
 Whose soul indignant spurns at British slavery,
 Who hates the tyrant guile, and the cunning, low and vile,
 That fosters cant, hypocrisy and knavery.
 Six Irish soldiers brave, rescued from the living grave,
 In which the cursed spite of England bound them,
 Life and liberty to save, came flying o'er the wave,
 And along with our bold skipper there we found them.
 Then the British lion roared for his captives ; and, on board
 A steamer, sent out soldiery to find them ;
 Police and volunteers, great guns and cannoneers,
 To capture, and once more in fetters bind them.
 They followed us all day, and we couldn't get away,
 For the wind was light, and blowing on the land ;
 And we tacked all through the night, till the early morning
 light
 Showed the steamer coming for-us close at hand.

Chorus. — Pass the bottle, etc.

It was useless strife to wage, she had got the weather-gage,
 On the wind she couldn't hope to outsail her ;
 So we held upon our course, to see what moral force
 They'd try upon the simple Yankee whaler.
 Then hot in haste and rage, all ready to engage,
 They came like bloodhounds straining at the slip,
 And the boss of all these jailers, to frighten us poor sailors,
 Fired a round shot from his cannon at our ship.

We never cracked a lay, on our course still bore away,
 And he found we wouldn't scare worth a cent;
 So another dodge he tried, but we knew the beggar lied,
 When he said he'd orders from our government.
 Then like a puffing pig, he strutted very big,
 On his quarter-deck, and loudly gave us warning,
 That he'd blow us to the devil, which wasn't very civil
 To lads who'd been up early in the morning.

Chorus. — Pass the bottle, etc.

But he found us rather fly, alive, quite pert, and sry,
 Cool and ready for this boast, right little caring,
 And our answer soon went back, as upon the starboard tack,
 Right down upon his broadside we came bearing;
 For we knew our cause was just, so in God we put our trust,
 For Liberty, all threats and danger scorning;
 And o'er our heads there flew Freedom's flag, red, white and
 blue,
 Streaming gaily in the breeze, our peak adorning.
 Then he hailed us once again, having blustered all in vain,
 With a mild request to let him come on board;
 But our captain answered no; "it would never do for Joe;"
 At sea to stop, he couldn't well afford.
 So they left us in despair, and skulked off to their lair,
 Whilst our starry flag with joyful hearts we hail her,
 For the lion dropped his tail, and his growl became a wail,
 When bearded by a simple Yankee whaler.

Chorus. — Pass the bottle, etc.

I'm Irish if you like, and perhaps my name is *Mike*,
 I'm a land-crab, and but little of a sailor;
 From the Western whaling-ground, all safe and homeward
 bound,
 On board a little, saucy Yankee whaler.

You may say I've lots of cheek, aye, and maybe call me
Greek,
Though I never knew Omega yet from Alpha ;
But I've sailed the world around, on the goose you'll find
I'm sound,
And I've cruised aboard the gallant old *Catalpa*.
Pass the bottle, if you please, now we're sitting at our ease,
Let us moisten up till song flows ripe and mellow ;
Here's to every honest lass, and as on through life they pass,
Here's a health to every honest, manly fellow.

The Sunburst and Tricolor.

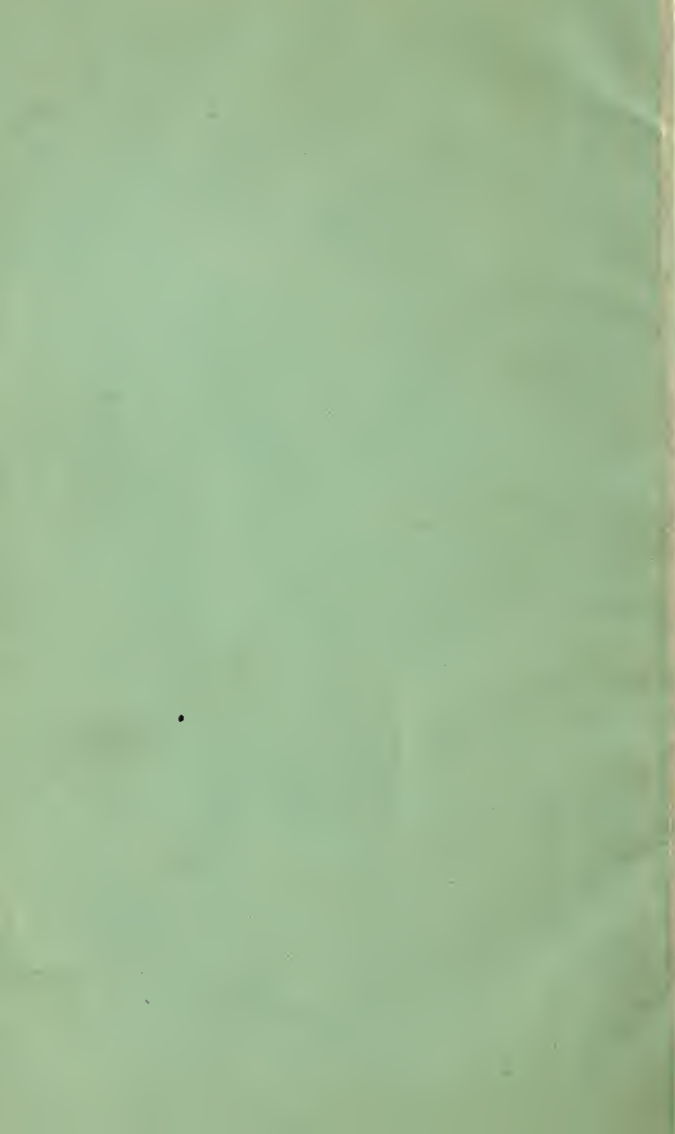
[*Written previous to sailing for Australia, and dedicated to the "U.I.B."*]

AIR. — *Down, down in our village.*

Comrades, around, come let us sing,
The Sunburst and the Tricolor;
Our hearts' affections 'round them cling,
With hope and pride for evermore.
Now first to *thee* our fathers raised,
Proud standard of the mighty dead!
Whose golden glory flashed and blazed
In triumph, o'er their victor tread.
The Green! the Green!
With emerald sheen,
Though Time hath tarnished many a fold;
The blood and tears,
And dust of years,
'Twill cast them off when once unrolled.
Our own old flag,
Our dear old flag,
Our native Green!
Our own dear flag,
'Twill wave again,
O'er earth and main,
Our native Green!
Our Sunburst flag.

Hurrah ! 'tis freedom's earliest dawn,
Bright streamers flash the cloudy skies ;
Out from the night of slavery drawn,
Behold our Tricolor arise !
The emblem of a patriot's love,
The symbol of a Nation's faith,
We swear each fold that floats above,
To hold and guard it until death.
 Soon may we see
 Amongst the free
Our Tricolor, a standard brave !
 Green, white and gold,
 Proudly unrolled,
Triumphant over Ireland wave !
 Our own young flag,
 Our dear young flag,
 Our Tricolor.
 Our brave young flag,
 Long torn and tried ;
Now side by side,
 True hearts uphold,
Our brave young flag.







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